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PAPER STILL VALUED FOR DOCUMENTATION

Three quarters (74 per cent) of consumers continue to receive hard copy statements from their financial services and utility suppliers, new research from Communisis reveals today.

The consumer omnibus survey, through *fastMAP*, revealed that almost half of people (49 per cent) continue to want paper statements to keep a handle on their finances and file for their records.

Interestingly, one in seven people (15 per cent) cited the case for paper statements because they either do not trust or do not use online banking. Men showed a higher propensity for online documentation than woman (13 per cent of men not trusting or banking online versus 16 per cent of women), but in general paper statements were found to be more popular with men than women (53 per cent, men, 47 per cent, women).

The majority of respondents (54 per cent) were found to receive between one and three paper statements every month. Yet over a quarter (27 per cent) was found to be sent between four and six statements through the post. 8 per cent receive over seven hard copy statements, up to 15 per month and only 11 per cent do not receive any, preferring to deal with their paper work online. Only 9 per cent of consumers said the reason they continue to receive statements through the post was because they had not been given the option for digital delivery by their supplier, suggesting that consumers are receiving paper statements through choice due to perceived convenience.

Furthermore, the results showed a direct correlation between affluence and the number of paper statements received per month. 31 per cent of "most affluent" consumers receive between four and six statements each month, 9 per cent higher than average, whilst in contrast 20 per cent of people falling into the least affluent category received the same number of mailed statements. However, there was no variance between the number of statements received and household status such as families, childless, retired or mixed households.

The South East (not including London) and East Anglia were found to be the regions most concerned with keeping statements as a record of their finances, being 6 per cent more likely than average to want a paper statement from their suppliers. Conversely, at 7 per cent less than average, consumers in Wales and the North West were found to be less likely to want hard copy documentation for their files

In terms of age group, surprisingly the 18-24s, alongside 35-44 year olds, were found to be the biggest advocates of the paper statement, showing that despite the digital revolution young people still value traditional communication techniques.

Alistair Blaxill, Executive Director at Communisis, comments:

“Our research shows that while people enjoy the obvious benefits of digital communications, there is still a clear demand for printed statements. This presents huge opportunities for sectors that need to provide transactional information to their customers including the financial, retail, home shopping, telecoms and utility sectors. Many organisations are now starting to incorporate targeted marketing messages into their printed statements, bills and invoices.

However, more importantly we are seeing a shift towards organisations putting the customer at the centre of their communications strategy and using whatever channel is the most appropriate whether that’s a statement, email or DM piece to communicate relevant and targeted messages and ensure full engagement with their brand.

In tight economic conditions, combining existing communications and marketing, not only spreads cost, but also gives brands a further touch point for marketing.”

Ends

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Notes to editors

About Communisis

Communisis is a UK leading marketing communications and print solutions business, specialising in helping customers make their communications processes more profitable. Working in partnership with its blue chip clients, Communisis helps to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of the whole business process of customer communications.

Through its proven experience and scale, it allows clients to transform their customer communications processes by enhancing and deploying customer data; providing technology to automate and streamline workflows; and have world-class production capabilities that can output via print and electronic channels.